

NATIONAL INTELLIGENCER.  
NOTICES OF NEW BOOKS, LITERATURE, AND  
THE FINE ARTS, IN NEW YORK.

NEW YORK, DECEMBER 24, 1850.

The HOLYDAYS are a fruitful season for the publishers as well as for caterers to less elevated tastes, and any one who should form his ideas of New York and New Yorkers from his observations in the neighborhood of Christmas, would be apt to imagine the city wholly given up to the most liberal tastes, especially in the way of illustrated books and gorgeous volumes of every description, from family bibles, ponderous and morose, to gilded and gilded, and every year increases the demand for that class of publications which in beauty and elegance harmonize with the generosity which they are intended to subserve. A few years ago most of our gift books were imported from England, and there was hardly a publisher who ventured upon the hazardous enterprise of getting up American illustrated books. This season the *APPLETONS* will sell fifty or sixty thousand dollars' worth of their "Women of the Old and New Testament," and similar works, which prove as popular in sale as they have been successful in the style of their "getting up."

"*Yala*," the Jenny Lind gift book of the season, issued by PUTNAM, and illustrated with designs from Hicks, Rosseter, and other native artists, forms one of the most attractive of the holiday publications, and ought to find readers and admirers wherever the sweet songstress tribute which has yet been paid to Jenny Lind's genius and loveliness of character, and one which does credit to American literature and art. Mr. PARKER GOWNS, the author, who is the son-in-law of Mr. BRANT, and one of the collaborators of the New York Evening Post, has interwoven the leading facts of the life and artistic career of the "Nightingale" with a fanciful tale of the Northern Mythology, in which the heroine, *Yala*, represents at once the aspirations, efforts, and triumphs of a truly inspired artist, and the charming traits of character and divine sympathies which are blended in Jenny Lind. The whole conception of the most graceful and pleasing character, and the story itself, independently of its associations, would attract and interest from the simplicity and true pathetic power which it displays. *Yala* ought to follow in the southward track of Jenny Lind, as a sort of moonlight reflection of the dazzling powers and genial warmth which her presence diffused.

"The Wide World," by ELIZABETH WATKINS, is the title of a most attractive story for young people, just published by PUTNAM, and one of the best of its class for the purposes of the holidays. It is a tale of domestic interest, lively, varied, and full of entertaining instruction and instructive entertainment.

Another and very valuable work from the press of the same publisher is *The World's Progress, a Dictionary of Dates*, by Mr. PUTNAM himself; a book which does credit to himself and to American publishers as a class, exhibiting as it does the results of research, taste, and labor bestowed in the most useful manner, and with great ability. He gives, in a single portable and convenient volume, not too large for the hand or the desk, a complete manual of those historical facts, statistics, and general items of information which make up the records of universal history, and which, though every body may have read at some period of their educational life, nobody can remember. An historical chart is prefixed to the work, and the chronological tables which occupy the first third of the volume are very full and satisfactory. Mr. PUTNAM's valuable labors in the preparation of this important manual will doubtless be compensated by the universal favor with which it has been received here and elsewhere.

Amongst the permanent literary features of this city, and forming one of the most efficient organs of taste and intellectual culture in the country, is *The Literary World*, a journal which has acquired a wide reputation and a very high standing for the ability and scholarship with which it is conducted by its editors, the Messrs. DUTCHMAN. The next volume for the coming year promises to be of increased interest and popularity, and will embrace new and attractive features. People are gradually finding out that "Telegraphic Despatches" and "City Items" do not embrace the whole sum and substance of the news and intelligence of the day or week, and that there are matters of interest and entertainment which deserve more than a passing paragraph in the crowded columns of a newspaper, and are worthy of a special record in more permanent form. The literary journal at the end of every week is, or ought to be, as great a desideratum as the political journal at the beginning of every day. The same motive which prompts a man of education and intelligence to keep himself informed as to the progress of society and the world in the practical concerns which affect the common interests of the whole race, should induce him peculiarly to interest himself in those movements of literature, art, science, and general culture which make the present age so much the superior of the past. There is no community where intelligence is so much diffused as in ours, where the literary press has hitherto met with so little encouragement. *The Literary World* is the only journal of its class which maintains the interests of American letters as a separate and distinct branch of public information, and the field for popular journalism. It deserves a wide circulation in the interior of the United States, as well as in the Eastern cities, as an able, entertaining, and completely sustained newspaper, presenting every week a record of all that comes under the head of literature, the fine arts, or matters of general social interest out of the immediate range of the daily press.

The Messrs. APPLETON have just opened their new store on Broadway, a little below the Park; a splendid front of freestone, massive and rich in its proportions and decorations, and forming one of the finest architectural features of the street. The interior is quite a curiosity of convenience and elegance of arrangement, and presents a *coup d'œil* well worthy of admiration. The depth of the building is about one hundred and sixty feet, and the floors on each story cover an unbroken area of nearly this extent; and by being pierced in the centre with large openings to admit the light from a brilliant sky-light above, present an appearance of elegance and lightness very rarely to be found. The capacities of the book-selling business to contribute to the elegance of a store interior of this kind, have never been so thoroughly tested, and the result is most satisfactory. The shelves, lined and loaded with books, present a much more suggestive and imposing sight than rows of silks or piles of brocade and damask. Something of the dignity of a grand library attaches itself to these tiers of volumes one above the other, a solid phalanx of the intellect and thought of the world's authors. The Messrs. APPLETON conduct their publishing business with distinguished taste and success, and their new store will be hereafter one of the sights of the city for strangers, and another indication of the wealth and progress of New York in the higher departments of mercantile enterprise. JACQUES DE MONDÉ.

A NEW LIGHT.  
The *Scientific American* has a letter from George Caldwell Blaney, Fort Washita, Arkansas, stating that he has discovered, and applied for patents, in this country and Europe, for a mode of making a cheap and brilliant gas, produced upon a new and scientific principle, which can be obtained at a cost less than one cent per thousand feet. Mr. Blaney says the process will far surpass every other means of producing gas; neither will the material rise in value on account of an increased demand. During the process, another article, more valuable than the gas itself, is produced. Neither is there required, during the operation, a single particle of wood, coal, water, or vegetable matter, and the material can be obtained in any climate or place, however remote from civilization.

The late London papers announce the death of Mr. JEREMY BENTHAM, at the age of 72 years. He was the owner of three large travelling menageries, embracing a large collection of rare and valuable wild animals and birds, by the exhibition of which he had acquired a handsome fortune. He acknowledged himself partial to the serpent species, from the fact that in early life the accidental purchase of a pair of box constrictors from the importers at the London Docks, for the sum of £75, and the success of the exhibition, was the means of introducing him into his "profession." He had been of late years very successful in breeding, and procuring, at the time of his death, more than twenty lions and five elephants, in addition to an unrivalled collection of other wild animals.

TO THE EDITORS.

The following is an extract of a Letter from a highly respectable American citizen who for the last twelve months has been on a visit to Europe. He is a gentleman of great observation, of sound judgment, and with long mercantile experience. I shall be pleased if you can find a place for it in your columns. W.

"LONDON, NOVEMBER 30, 1850.  
"Has the South seriously considered the injustice done to herself and to the wearers of her great staple by the frauds of the English manufacturer? Let her compare the genuine fabrics of our own looms with the trash sent out by Britain. A late magazine regards the monopoly enjoyed in supplying foreign semi-barbarians with gaudy cottons, half of whose weight was of spurious material, as the chief bond of protection. That this is all true, is avowed by Mr. McCune, the venerable British statistic. After quoting Mr. Burns (see *Glance*, 1843) for the fact that 'flour, glue, pulverized china, clay, and other materials' enter largely into the manufacture of Cottons here, he estimates the quantity of Flour thus used at 393,000,000 lbs. per annum, or more than we sell under the existing tariff! In iron, we fare little better; indeed, when the loss of life is estimated by the accidents resulting from the use of their defective rails, far worse. A highly respectable manufacturer admitted, a few days since, that true economy would be best consulted by the use of our own superior iron; and that we often received but a small portion (say the third) of merchantable iron in the cheap rails now defiling our country; as the first question asked, when hands applied for work, was, 'How much slag can you cover up?' As we possess the raw material for producing these great elements of national independence in such superabundance, and for rendering the round world our tributaries, our present policy, as a mere question of political economy, is the one of suicidal folly."

EDITOR'S CORRESPONDENCE.  
FROM PATRICKSON, (IND.) DECEMBER 17, 1850.

Messrs. GALE & SEXTON: Allow me to say [after a line or two to his friends] that although you are personally unknown to me, and your readers here generally, yet, by your unwavering and devoted to the Union, you have endeavored yourself to be the mutual tie that should bind forever the men of the North and the South."

It is true that, as yet, we have not made much noise in this State about the Union; nor have we had many "Union meetings." And, were it not for showing our hands on the side of our country, it were useless for us to have any such meetings. For, while the great political sea has been agitated, and its "billows" tossed to the skies till its profound depths have been disclosed, both in the North and stormy South, the People—in Indiana, Illinois, and many other portions of the great Mississippi Valley—have stood calm and firm; true to the Constitution and Laws of the country, and for the Union, with "one heart and one soul."

Not that we have been indifferent about the great Slavery Agitation that has been going on in Congress, and the strife between our brethren, North and South. For we have looked on with intense anxiety, till at last we beheld with joy that our country was safe, the compromise Measures were passed, and the old ship Constitution had rode out the storm, and the glorious stars and stripes were streaming from her mast head!

I would adopt the eloquent language of Mr. CHARLES G. ATHERTON, in his Union speech made at Manchester, New Hampshire: "Honor to those wise and patriotic men who effected the compromise; honor to all those who exerted themselves on the side of their country's institutions, and stood shoulder to shoulder for the Constitution!"

I repeat, then, think not that, because we have not said much about the Union in this portion of the Great West, we are indifferent to it. Indeed we think much about it. And there is no other portion of country in this broad land in which the Union is held more dear than it is by our people; for, while the tide of emigration is tending thither, and our citizens are busied in making plank roads, railroads, and canals, as well as many bonds to keep the Union together, and forming a great nucleus here around which the States, North and South, may cluster, they can point to every part of our beloved country and say, "This is my country and these are my brethren." Very respectfully, &c.

THE HON. MARMADUKE WILLIAMS.

It is perhaps due alike to history and to the name at the head of this article, that a more accurate account than any we have seen, of the life and last days, should be published. Judge Williams was born on the 6th of April, 1772, in Caswell county, North Carolina, and was there married on the 25th December, 1798, to Mrs. Agnes Harris, whose maiden name was Payne.

Judge Williams was elected to Congress from the Caswell district in 1808, to succeed his brother, Robert Williams, who was appointed by Mr. Jefferson Governor of the Mississippi territory, and continued in Congress till the 23d March, 1809. He was a republican, and supported the administration of Mr. Jefferson against the fierceness of party it had to encounter. In 1810 he removed, with his family, to Madison county in Alabama, which then formed a part of the Mississippi Territory, and from thence to Tuscaloosa, in 1818, where he continued to reside until his death, which occurred on the 29th October, 1850.

Judge Williams was a delegate from Tuscaloosa county to the Convention that formed our State constitution, and at the first election thereafter was a candidate for Governor in opposition to the estimable and talented Territorial Governor, the late Wm. W. Bibb, and proved himself, though unsuccessful, a most formidable opponent. He was repeatedly elected to represent Tuscaloosa in the Legislature, and in 1826, by profession, and in 1828 was appointed by Gov. Murphy, commissioner to adjust the unsettled accounts between Alabama and Mississippi, growing out of their then late territorial relationship. In 1832 or 1833 he was elected Judge of the county court of Tuscaloosa county—an office which he held with acceptability, until April, 1842, when he resigned, having attained the age of seventy years, and with the constitution declares a disqualification for the bench.

He became a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1833, and during about four weeks' confinement to his room and bed was very patient, with his mind in a state of alternation between the expectation of recovery and death.

His intellectual powers were undimmed as long as he was capable of speaking, and when with a consciousness of approaching dissolution he was asked what were his prospects beyond the grave, he answered, that his confidence was in God and the Atonement, and that he was resigned to the will of his Heavenly Father. Thus ended the life of one who for nearly seventy-nine years had been permitted to sojourn on earth.—*Tuscaloosa Monitor*.

COLUMBIA, DECEMBER 24, 1850.

DISASTROUS RAILROAD ACCIDENT.—The cars that left here this morning on the Charlotte road, for Winoona, with twenty passengers, had just entered on the trestle-work at Elklin's Mill, distant about ten miles, when something was discovered to be wrong. The engine halted, and the two ends of the cross-ties of the trestle-work gave way, and the train, supported by the cross-ties, fell into the mill pond. All the passengers were more or less injured. Mr. NICHOLAS GRISON, the depot agent at Winoona, and an infant of Mr. and Mrs. POWELL, died from the injuries received. A servant girl of Mr. LYLES was drowned. General REWEN had an arm dislocated, and received a cut in the forehead. The break took place from the front wheel of the engine, which was caught in some unknown cause, and lodged in front of the wheel on the iron rail, and this caused the cars to be thrown from the track, with the fatal result. The trestle-work received no injury, and two trains have since passed over it.

A BEAUTIFUL FLOWER.—A friend presented us a day or two since with a curiosity in the shape of a flower, which, we have seen in one of the greatest wonders of the floral kingdom we have ever seen. It is about the size of a walnut, perfectly white, with fine leaves resembling very much indeed the white plant. Upon the blooming of the flower, in the cup formed by the leaves, is the exact image of a dove lying on its back, with its wings extended. The peak of the bill and the eyes are plainly to be seen, and a small leaf before the dove's head, was borne at the base of the outspread tail. This leaf can be raised or shut down with the fingers, without breaking or apparently injuring it, until the flower reaches its full bloom, when it drops off. We regret our inability to give a technical description of this curiosity at this time, but hope to do so shortly, as we have been promised by a person every way qualified to write it.—*Panama Star*.

A military company, composed of about fifty boys under fourteen years of age, paraded Broadway, New York, on Saturday last, much to the amazement of the inhabitants and pedestrians along that crowded thoroughfare. They are called the "Grasshopper Guards," and as they marched along, a large, very skillfully and effectively riddled with musket balls, was borne at the head of the company. The uniforms were in all respects similar to that of other companies, and the arms were equally diminished in size.

WASHINGTON.

"Liberty and Union, now and forever, one and inseparable."

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 28, 1850.

PLAN OF THE GOVERNOR OF VIRGINIA.

We extract from the opening of an editorial article in the "Richmond Examiner" of Tuesday last the following:

"The *National Intelligencer* contains an article upon the late Message from the Governor of Virginia which misrepresents that document most grossly. The writer could never have read it, or he would not have regarded the proposition it contained to be one for a National Convention to amend the Constitution of the United States. Yet that is the view which he takes of it, and it is a view in which it seems to be very generally regarded at a distance. Hence it is reasoned that in such a Convention the South would be largely outnumbered, and in consequence lose the last fragile barrier which protects them from unlimited aggression. 'But the Governor of Virginia recommended no such thing.'"

Considering the political relation to the Governor of the Editor of the Journal from which the above is taken, we must regard it as an authoritative expression of the intent of his Message to the Legislature of Virginia, upon which we had lately occasion to remark.

It is a satisfaction to know that we had so far misapprehended his recommendation of a "General Convention" to represent "the whole People," as to suppose that a "Convention," in the sense in which the term is used in the Constitution of the United States, was intended. Our misapprehension was nevertheless sincere, and to any one familiar with the provisions of that instrument, natural. Nor, as the "Examiner" itself discloses, were we singular in it. Other minds received the same impression of interpretation of it the same fundamental provision of the Constitution which we quoted.

The constitutional provision on the subject of a Convention of the States was not specified, it is true, in the Governor's Message; but what it proposed to be done we presumed was to be done in conformity and subordinately to the Constitution. The Message recommended an appeal to be made by the State of Virginia to "all the States in the Union" to unite in sending Delegates to represent the whole People in a "General Convention." Such a "Convention," within the meaning of the Constitution, is required by that instrument to be called in a certain manner and form. Nor would the acts of any Convention of the States differently constituted be of any legal validity. On the contrary, evidently to guard against such eccentric or irregular action on the part of any two or more disinterested, disaffected, or ambitious States, the Constitution has in terms interdicted any State from entering, without the consent of Congress, "into any agreement or compact with another State."

We now, however, understand the measure proposed by the Governor to be the call of a Convention extra-constitutional in its character.

Beside that the acts or decisions of such a Convention could bind neither States nor People, the plan is open to a hundred objections, any one of which would be fatal to it. Suppose, for example, the State of Virginia to "invite" all the States, unless all of them were to accept the invitation, it would fail of its object to make "a final settlement" of any thing. Again: the States can, of course, act only, as the State of Virginia will have acted, through the medium of their respective Legislatures. How many of those Legislatures are now in session, or will be in session within a period "not later than May," to act upon the invitation in any way? And, again, supposing every State to be represented in such a Convention, what possible authority could a majority, or even the whole of such a Convention, have to bind the several States to any course of action or policy which it should prescribe? The measure recommended by the Governor—admit his motives for it to be both fair and patriotic—is not only not constitutional in its general features, but wholly impracticable in its details.

Were, however, its details practical, and ever so easy of execution, what could possibly be accomplished by such an assemblage? "The principles which should govern the action of this Convention ought to be announced," says the Governor, "in the resolutions by which it is called." If principles are laid down for it in the very terms of its summons; if it be only called to enact a code of prescribed principles—to register an edict of the State by which it is called—what possible inducement would the States generally have for acceding to it? Or, if it were acceded to, what results possibly could be anticipated from it but discord and mischief? And, if none should be invited but those who are in favor of the perpetuation of the Union, could every State be represented—South Carolina, for example, whose late acts are in a spirit of implacable enmity to the Union, and look to nothing but its destruction? And, further, if those States only are invited to be represented who are "in favor of the Fugitive Slave Bill," how many would by that very definition be inevitably excluded, who, however loyal to the Union, obedient to its laws, and determined to abide by and sustain them, could not be expected to be possessed with the *furore* on that particular subject, with which, though the life is out of its body, certain political monomaniacs in other Southern States besides South Carolina are endeavoring to galvanize the *Evil of the Day* into a spasmodic resurrection?

Our object is not, however, to argue this matter at length, but, whilst placing the Governor on his own ground in relation to the character of the Convention which he proposes, to lay before our readers the following calm and temperate views of the subject, taken by a leading journal published in the capital of his own State:

FROM THE RICHMOND WRIT OF DECEMBER 20.  
With due submission to the better judgment of Governor FLOYD, we are inclined to believe that the plan recommended will not secure any one of the proposed objects; but will, on the contrary, rather aggravate and increase the evils he proposes to remedy.

If the Convention be composed exclusively of the advocates of the Union, which appears to be the idea, the relative strength of the Union and Disunion parties cannot be tested. There being no mode of ascertaining whether the Convention would represent the majority in the States, its moral influence in the free States would thereby be greatly impaired, if not wholly lost, and the assurances and guarantees that might be given to the South would be esteemed valueless. It could not, as an embodiment of public opinion, check the spirit of agitation, for those designed to be reached are below public opinion. GRANT SMITH has recently published a letter in which he proposes to re-organise the forces of Abolitionism. It is supposed that so restless a spirit as that which animates this wretch will be exercised by the Convention? That man must be far gone in Utopian speculation who could think so.

The plan of the Abolitionists is to agitate, by moving the repeal of the Fugitive Slave Law in Congress, and there must the contest be fought. How the action of the Convention to operate upon Congress? Will the members of that body look to the resolutions of that body as surer for their conduct, or will they look to their immediate constituents? Those acquainted with the selfish hearts of politicians will find no difficulty in solving this question. If the convocation of a National Convention is to do any good whatever, it must be by shaping and controlling the opinion of the masses. This has already been done. The Union party in the free States has now an active and real existence. The advantages resulting from our existing Government have been explained to all where any explanation was necessary; the memories of the past and the feelings of the future have been appealed to, and the dangers of agitation and the horrors of disunion portrayed in fearful and faithful colors. By this time every man's opinions, or where there are no opinions, his feelings have taken a definite form, and the strength of the parties being pretty well ascertained. What possible good, then, could a General Convention accomplish? The issue of Abolition or the Union has been fairly made up in the free States, and it is to be tried in the Congressional and Senatorial elections. These are the theatres of action, these the stage upon which the friends of our existing organization will be called to act. If only friends of the Union, or, in the language of the message, "all in favor of a perpetuation of the Union," be "invited to unite in this movement," what sort of assurance would the Convention be able to give that the compromise would be sustained? Upon the strength of the opposition would depend the question of safety to the South, and this plan does not propose to ascertain all that the Convention could give would be mere paper guarantees, and in the constitution and laws, and resolutions of Union men, and where the South has already made up its mind, such securities. We have had enough of such assurances; what we want now is for the people of the free States to show us that they respect our constitutional rights, to show us with respect to the slavery question, one feature of which is the fugitive law. Let the people themselves now ratify and ratify of the Union of their agents and not send the solemn agreement into which they have entered. Good faith, as well as sound policy, requires them to pursue this course. There are two features in the compromise that wear a Southern aspect—the failure to insert the Wilmot proviso in the Territorial bills, and the passage of the law above-mentioned. The first is barren and not a fruitful victory, and from the second alone we derive any substantial benefit. If the Northern people show themselves ready to take all the advantages accruing to them from the compact, and yet deny the South her share of the benefits, it would be a forcible reason why we should dissolve all connexion with a people so faithless. The peace measures resemble in equity and good conscience dependent covenants, where the performance of one is the consideration or the performance of the other. Any change in the fugitive law which would impair its efficacy ought to be considered a signal for action.

But we have wandered from the topic before us. We cannot understand anything in the course recommended that would tend to harmonize and unite the South. Nothing that the Government could do would tend to the effect of liberality to the Constitution, would restrain the South if the compromise were touched, nor, on the other hand, would any thing which that Convention could say justify or induce the South to secede from the Union if the course of Congress should not be adverse to slavery. Why, then, hold the Convention? But, if it could compass no good result, would it be equally unproductive of injury? We opine not. The election of the members would renew that agitation which, under the efforts of the Union men of the non-slaveholding States, has begun to abate. In this point of view, this movement would be the most ill-judged imaginable. We can see no good but great evil to grow out of Governor FLOYD's Convention, and we hope his Excellency will abandon the idea.

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THE STEAM FRIGATE SUSQUEHANNA.

The immense engines of this magnificent Steamship were in motion on the 23d instant, and worked to the admiration of all. C. W. COPELAND, Esq., who designed the engines, was present, and expressed himself highly pleased with the manner in which his plans had been executed by Messrs. Murray and Hazlehurst, the builders, and also with their performance. The *SUSQUEHANNA* is now ready for sea, and will leave Philadelphia for Norfolk on Thursday. She is in all respects a noble vessel, and in her approaching cruise round the World will, no doubt, reflect the highest praise on the shipwrights and machinists of Baltimore and Philadelphia, who have unitedly been engaged in her construction.

IOWA.—The Legislature met on the 2d instant. ENOS LOWE was chosen President of the Senate, and GEORGE TEMPLE Speaker of the House. The message of Gov. ANSEL BRIGGS shows the receipts into the treasury from October 31, 1848, to November 4, 1850, to have been \$90,444.33; paid out \$90,442.94; leaving a balance of \$1.39. The revenue assigned in 1850 amounted to \$56,538, showing an increase from 1848 of the revenue from taxable property within the State of \$20,409. Gov. BRIGGS does not think that the Fugitive Slave Law suspends the privilege of the writ of *habeas corpus*, and says no good citizen of Iowa will, for a moment, sanction or countenance resistance to that law.

THE CUBAN INVADERS.—The leading participants in the Cuban Expedition were arraigned before the United States Circuit Court at New Orleans on Monday the 16th instant. The following appeared to answer to their names:

Gen. Narciso Lopez, Col. Theodore O'Hara, Col. John Pickett, Maj. Thomas J. Hawkins, Col. W. H. Bell, Capt. A. J. Lewis, Col. Robert Wheat, Gen. John Henderson, L. J. Sigur, Esq., and Gen. D. Augustin. Those who did not appear were A. Ganayles, Governor Quitman, John O'Sullivan, Maj. Bunch, Peter Smith, and N. D. Haden.

Gen. Lopez pleaded in abatement to the indictment, on the ground that the Grand Jury had been illegally drawn and impanelled, as did also Messrs. Sigur and Augustin. The others put in the plea of not guilty.

Gen. Henderson requested an immediate trial, but Judge McCALLER postponed the consideration of that point, as well as of the pleas in abatement, until the next day, when they could be argued, and he would determine whether he should await the attendance of the Circuit Judge.

At a recent meeting of the stockholders of the *Pennsylvania Railroad Company*, (Harrisburg to Pittsburg), it was voted to increase the capital from \$7,500,000 to \$10,000,000. We learn that a memorial is in circulation in Philadelphia praying the City Councils to make an additional subscription of \$1,500,000 to the stock of the road, provided an equal amount of \$1,500,000 is obtained from other sources. The new subscriptions are to be applied to the construction of the central division across the Alleghany mountain region—the Portage Railroad of the State being used only as a temporary expedient.

FROM FLORIDA.—By a late arrival at Savannah, from Indian River, we learn that all is quiet in Florida—at least, there were no signs of Indian disturbances at that quarter. Major LOU's company of United States troops are at the post on Indian River, but will shortly proceed to Fort Monroe, (S. C.) and the company at the Fort will proceed to Florida.

LOSS OF THE STEAMER SOUTH AMERICA.—The steamer *South America*, Capt. Logan, from Cincinnati for New Orleans, with a full cargo of flour, whiskey, brand, &c., and about two hundred passengers, including one hundred and fifty United States recruits, from Newport Barracks, took fire in the wood rack, alongside of the boilers, on the afternoon of the 16th instant, when near Morgan's Bend, about fifteen miles above Bayou San. The pilot at once ran her into the bank, but by the time the boat struck the bluff, the fire had enveloped her, driving the passengers and crew aft, and affording no other means of escape than by the yawl boat.

Some thirty or forty lives were lost. The cabin passengers, thirty-two in number, were all saved, with the exception of Mrs. Logan, the engineer's wife.

FIGURES CANNOT LIE.—Can't they? We have seen figures in Broadway pretending to be fish and blood that were only wool and whalebone.—*Figure*.

THE DANGER OF POLITICAL ABSTRACTIONS.

A proposition has been for some time under consideration, as our readers are probably aware, in the Legislature of the generally cautious and conservative State of NORTH CAROLINA, for affirming the right of Secession, by her own act, of any State from the Union. This right, which it is proposed to affirm, it is not proposed to make use of at present, but to hold in reserve until a suitable occasion shall arise for its exercise. Upon which state of the case we commend to our readers the subjoined remarks, extracted from a Letter from the sensible and respected Senior Editor of the *Fayetteville Observer*, written home from Raleigh for publication in his own paper. Brief as is the space which it fills, it comprises more practical wisdom than many an hour speech:

"Nobody pretends now to desire Secession. The cry is, let us only assert the abstract right; it may be that the right will never be exercised. This is certainly an artful maneuver. All men are flattered with the assurance that they have rights—great rights, which enable them, if they choose to exercise them, to put up and pull down Governments. They naturally feel inclined to contend for such rights. They are restless under the restraints of Government, even though they have wisely imposed those restraints upon themselves by written constitutions and laws. All such feelings are appealed to by the Secession resolutions, and especially when men are told that no harm can come of asserting the right, as it is not intended to exercise it. Such considerations, urged as they are here in private conversation, may induce many to vote for the resolutions. The next step after their adoption would be, to find some pretext, some real or imaginary grievance, to justify the exercise of a right which, in an unguarded moment, and under false pretences, had been claimed."

"But, as I have already remarked, the right will not, I think, be asserted. The Legislature will do nothing to relieve the distress of those political Hamans who can never be happy so long as 'Mordcaai the Jew sitteth at the King's gate'—so long as the seats in the United States Senate are filled by any others than themselves."

THE SOBER SENSE OF VIRGINIA.

FROM THE "VALLEY WHITE" OF DECEMBER 20.

It has been conceded on all hands, from the first adoption of the measures of compromise to the present, that nine-tenths, if not nineteen-twentieths of the people of Virginia were the steadfast and unwavering supporters of the Union. While both at the North and the South, Secession and Nullification have been advised and threatened in various quarters, still in Virginia the great mass of the people have moved on in the even tenor of their way. The *Secessionists* in the Old Dominion are entirely too weak even to avow their sentiments, much less to attempt to carry them out in any practical form. If *Nullification* is ever popular in Virginia, the people must be brought to it by degrees—and that too by stratagem and disguise. The pill must be administered under some other name. The Disunionists already understand this fact, and they are by no means idle in devising schemes for bringing Virginia to the "sticking point." Instead of Disunion meetings, we now hear of *Southern Rights Associations*, *Non-intercourse Resolutions*, &c. Meetings of this character have lately been held in several counties of the State.

As to the scheme projected for adopting a system of *Non-intercourse with the North*, we regard it as every way impracticable, short of a dissolution of the Union. And, if even practicable, it would in its operations be impolitic and unjust. While the adoption of such a course would be highly proper in relation to some of the non-slaveholding States, yet all must confess that it would be unjust to abandon all commercial intercourse with such States as Pennsylvania and Indiana, both of whom have given abundant evidence that they are determined to abide by the Constitution and execute the provisions of the Fugitive Slave Law. Even in New York, it is well known that the enemies of the Institutions of the South are not to be found among its commercial and business men, but among an entirely different class. In fact, the best, and perhaps the only true friends which the South have in New York, are to be found among its commercial population. By adopting this non-intercourse policy, we fail to reach our enemies, and only punish our friends. But, even if it were desirable for the South to abandon all commercial intercourse with New York, Massachusetts, and some other Northern States, yet it would avail nothing so long as we continue our dealing with any of the non-slaveholding States. Suppose we repudiate the trade of New York, and continue that of Pennsylvania. Would not our non-intercourse with New York prove a mere farce? Could not New York still continue to trade with us through her agents in Pennsylvania? We regard all such schemes as *disguised plots* to endeavor to commit the people of the Old Dominion to what they have always repudiated—*Nullification and Disunion*.

PROSPERITY OF MARYLAND.

We have heretofore frequently had occasion to advert to the fact of the steady increase in the value of Maryland lands. The advance of agriculture in our State has been steady and sure, and by the aid of agricultural associations, the application of various fertilizing substances, and the energy and perseverance of our Maryland farmers, lands which a few years ago were considered not worth cultivation have been resuscitated and made to pay well for their improvement. As an evidence of the increased value of land, we need only cite the following facts from a gentleman well versed in the matter, and who has furnished them to the *Cecil Whig*. One farm has increased during the last ten years from \$4,500 to \$8,400; another from \$3,300 to \$8,000; another tract of 111 acres, from \$285 to \$4,000; and for another large tract, which 15 years ago sold for \$12,100, \$50,000 have lately been offered. These farms are situated in the fifth election district of Cecil county, and are but a fair sample of the increase in the value of land in that section of the State. We are happy to add that these evidences of prosperity are not confined to Cecil alone, but throughout the State, wherever the proper care and attention has been paid to agriculture, the result has been quite as satisfactory.

[Baltimore American]

CHRISTMAS EVE.

It must have made the hearts of the little folks bound with joy to witness the brilliant display last night in the windows of the Confectioners, Jewellers, Booksellers, and fancy store-keepers on Pennsylvania avenue, Seventh street, and other well known juvenile mart, where handsome Christmas presents could be had to suit every taste, palate, and inclination. The fine weather, the beautiful display, the broad pavements, and last, but not least, the attractive advertisements, allured to the stores above enumerated, and especially to those of Messrs. Miller, Gautier, Norbeck, Havenner, Grube, Columbus, and other confectioners, a larger number of young and eager visitors than we ever before noticed in this city on Christmas eve. It was indeed a lively and felicitous spectacle to see the stores crowded for several hours with contiguous family groups—of fathers and grandfathers, filling their pockets, or loading their servants with cakes, toys, books, and other seasonable presents for the merry time of Christmas. It was also gratifying to observe, that good order prevailed on our public avenues and streets, with but very few violations of the city ordinances, by the firing of guns, pistols, fire crackers, &c.

ALBANY, DECEMBER 24.